

## STATE OF COLORADO

### Department of State

1700 Broadway  
Suite 300  
Denver, CO 80290

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**Gigi Dennis**  
Secretary of State

**Michael L. Shea**  
Director, Licensing & Enforcement Division

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## TIPS ON WISE GIVING

- Ask for the solicitor's registration number and the registration number of the charity he or she is representing.
- Check the charity's disclosure and financial statements on the Secretary of State's website.
- If the charity is required to file the federal form 990 or 990-EZ with the IRS, ask to see it.
- Ask your tax advisor or the IRS if your donation will be tax-deductible. The fact that a charity has a tax identification number does not necessarily mean your contribution is tax-deductible.
- Ask the solicitor how much or what percentage of the donation will go to the charity.
- Be wary if the charity does not want to provide information about its programs and finances. Reputable charities will gladly provide the information requested.
- Watch out for charities with names that sound similar to well-known organizations. Sometimes these sound-alike names are simply intended to confuse donors.
- Do not pay in cash – donate by check made payable to the charity.
- If solicited in person, ask to see identification for both the solicitor and the charity.
- Certain well-known charities such as the Red Cross will never solicit donations over the phone.
- Beware of unsolicited email. There have already been reports of email that purport to be solicitations from the Red Cross. The emails have links embedded in them that will take you to a fake Red Cross website. Further, such unsolicited email may spread computer viruses. Do not respond to any email soliciting donations from any organization. Instead, go directly to the organization's website or call to make donations.
- If you believe that you have been solicited by a fraudulent charity, please file a complaint with the Secretary of State website: [http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/bingo\\_raffles/charity\\_complaint\\_form.pdf](http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/bingo_raffles/charity_complaint_form.pdf)) or the Attorney General (phone: 1-800-222-4444; website: [www.ago.state.co.us/consline/consline.cfm](http://www.ago.state.co.us/consline/consline.cfm)).
- If you feel uncomfortable simply, say "No thank you."